

THE GUARDIAN

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AMERICAN FORCES INFORMATION SERVICE

NEWS ARTICLES

Pilot Receives Medal of Honor for Heroism in Vietnam

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26, 2007 – President Bush presented the Medal of Honor today to retired Army Lt. Col. Bruce Crandall, 41 years after heroic actions in Vietnam the president said demonstrate the best of America and its military members.

Bush praised Crandall's heroism during the Battle of Ia Drang Valley in November 1965, when he repeatedly flew into intensive enemy fire to rescue and resupply besieged 1st Cavalry Division ground troops.

Crandall proved himself "a daring pilot, a devoted soldier and a selfless leader" during the first major ground battle of the war at Landing Zone X-Ray near the Ia Drang River, he said.

The story of the mission is captured in the bestselling book and movie, "We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young."

Early on Nov. 14, 1965, Crandall, then a major commanding A Company, 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), was transporting a battalion of soldiers into Landing Zone X-ray, Bush recounted. After several routine lifts into the area, the ground troops came under a massive attack from the North Vietnamese Army.

During Crandall's next flight – a

flight that left three soldiers on his helicopter killed and three more wounded – he remained at the landing zone in direct line of enemy fire so four wounded troops could be loaded aboard, the president said.

After returning the wounded troops to base for treatment, Crandall knew his mission was finished, Bush said, but couldn't bring himself to abandon the ground troops who were outnumbered and low on ammunition. Crandall asked for volunteers to fly back to LZ X-ray, and Capt. Ed Freeman stepped forward.

"In their unarmed choppers, they flew through a cloud of smoke and a wave of bullets to deliver desperately needed supplies," the president said. "They carried out more of the wounded, even though medical evacuation was really not their mission."

Crandall would have been a hero if he had stopped there, Bush said. "But he didn't stop," he said. "He flew back into X-ray again and again--14 times he flew into what they called the 'Valley of Death.'" He made those flights recognizing the extreme risk to his own life, he said.

Over the course of the day, Crandall flew three different choppers, with two of them damaged so badly they would no longer fly. "But he kept flying until every wounded man had been evacuated and every need of the battalion had been met," Bush said.

By the day's end, Crandall and Freeman had spent more than 14 hours in the air, evacuating 70 wounded

men and providing a lifeline that allowed the battalion to survive, Bush said.

"To the men of Ia Drang, the image of Major Crandall's helicopter coming to their rescue is one they will never forget," Bush said. He noted that one officer who witnessed the actions called them "without question, the most valorous I've observed of any helicopter pilot in Vietnam" The battalion commander said that without Crandall, his battalion would have been overrun, Bush said, and another officer said, "I will always be in awe of Major Bruce Crandall."

Bush noted that while others have praised Crandall, he never thought of himself as a hero. "There was never a consideration we would not go into those landing zones," Bush said, quoting Crandall. "They were my people down there and they trusted in me to come and get them."

Crandall's character and leadership have grown clearer over the years, Bush said. He went on to make more rescue flights, served a second tour in Vietnam, retired from the military and worked in his local government in Washington state.

Perhaps most telling, Bush said, was Crandall's decision to withdraw his own name from consideration for the Medal of Honor to ensure that Freeman would receive his. Bush presented Freeman the honor in July 2001.

"Today, the story comes to its rightful conclusion" as Crandall finally receives his Medal of Honor, Bush said.

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Doolittle Raid on Japan

Continued from February

18 April 1942

Raiding Force B-25s

A wreath commemorates the Doolittle Raiders who lost their lives in the line of duty in World War II. The Doolittle Raider reunion/memorial ceremony was held at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base Museum in Dayton, Ohio, April 18, 2006. Defense Dept. photo by William D. Moss





Retired Lt. Col. Chase Nelson of the famed Doolittle Raiders speaks to the crowd during the Doolittle Raider Memorial ceremony at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, in Dayton, Ohio, April 18, 2006. Defense Dept. photo by William D. Moss



The surviving members of the famed Doolittle Raiders attend the dedication ceremony at the Doolittle Raider Memorial held at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, April 18, 2006. The Doolittle Raiders, the group that bombed Tokyo early in World War II, held their 64th reunion at the museum. Defense Dept. photo by William D. Moss

A crowd gathered to watch the reunion/dedication ceremony at the Doolittle Raider Memorial held at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, in Dayton, Ohio, April 18, 2006. Defense Dept. photo by William D. Moss





The National Director of the U.S. Air Force Museum retired U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Charles Metcalf (left) and Doolittle Raider retired Lt. Col. Chase Nelson (second from left) join two cadets from the Air Force Academy Cadet Wing in placing a wreath to commemorate those raiders who lost their lives in the line of duty. Defense Dept. photo by William D. Moss



Retired Col. John Doolittle, son of Jimmy Doolittle of the famed Doolittle Raiders, joins the reunion ceremony at the Doolittle Raider Memorial held at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, in Dayton, Ohio, April 18, 2006. Defense Dept. photo by William D. Moss





'Doolittle Raiders' Participate in Veterans Day Activities

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Nov. 11, 2006 – Five former Army Air Corps members who were part of a famed World War II bombing mission traveled to the nation's capital to participate in many Veterans Day events, including wreath-laying ceremonies at the Air Force and Navy Memorials yesterday.



Retired Maj. Gen. David Jones and Philip Antonello lay a wreath in honor of the USS Hornet at the Navy Memorial in Washington, Nov. 9. On April 18, 1942, the Doolittle Raiders, led by then Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle, became the first to bombard Japan following the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Doolittle Raiders have celebrated their victory for the past 64 years.
Photo by Airman 1st

Known as the "Doolittle Raiders," the surviving members of commander Lt. Col. James Doolittle's World War II raid over Japan also met with servicemembers at the Pentagon and Bolling Air Force Base here.

At the Navy Memorial, Doolittle Raiders met with former crewmembers of the Navy carrier USS Hornet, which launched the 16 Army Air Corps B-25s that carried the men across the Pacific and over Japan on April 18, 1942, four months after the Pearl Harbor attack. The Doolittle Raiders dropped their bombs on Japan, hitting targets in Tokyo, Yokohama, Kobe and Nagoya.

During a wreath-laying ceremony at the Air Force Memorial, Air Force Secretary Michael Wynne paid tribute to the Doolittle Raiders, saying "these magnificent (Air Force memorial) spires that soar upward call to mind the unlimited horizon of the human spirit, a spirit that dwelled in you as you pulled your B-25s off that USS Hornet in the Pacific on that historic day."

Though the bombing mission caused little damage in Japan, it had a huge impact on America's morale and changed the tone of the war. It set the United States and its allies on a course that would eventually lead to domination of the Pacific during World War II and the ultimate defeat of Japan in 1945.

Of the original 80 airmen who took part in the raid, 16 remain. They try to hold an annual reunion to pay tribute to their fellow Raiders who have died since the last time they met.



California Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans News

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February 9, 2007

NEWS FROM THE CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

PHOTO OF GOV. SCHWARZENEGGER PRESENTING U.S. ARMY CORPORAL BEN WALDRON WITH THE GOVERNOR'S POW/MIA NATIONAL MEMORIAL COMMEMORATIVE MEDALLION

Today, Gov. Schwarzenegger awarded the Governor's POW/MIA National Memorial Commemorative Medallion to U.S. Army Corporal Ben Waldron, who served in WWII and was held Prisoner of War for over three years. The original Governor's POW/MIA National Memorial Commemorative Medallion that was awarded to Corporal Waldron was stolen from his home along with other personal effects, including the journal he kept while being held prisoner. The Governor will contribute \$5,000 of his own money towards the reward fund for the recovery of Corporal Waldron's stolen items. This photo was taken today in the Council Room, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA.



Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger presents U.S. Army Corporal Ben Waldron with the Governor's POW/MIA National Memorial Commemorative Medallion. (Photo Credit: William Foster, Office of Governor Schwarzenegger)



HERO IN THE HOUSE - President George W. Bush applauds as Medal of Honor recipient U.S. Army Maj. Bruce P. Crandall kisses his wife, Arlene, in the East Room of the White House, Feb. 26, 2007. Crandall was awarded the Medal of Honor for his extraordinary heroism as a 1st Cavalry helicopter flight commander in the Republic of Vietnam in November 1965. White House photo by Eric Draper



Above; Huey's from the 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion doing Air assaults with the 7th Cav.

Right; Air assault upon a ridge line sometime in 1966. Ride provided by the 229th.

Above; Returning to base camp at An Khe after being out in the "field" for a long very long time.



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Vietnam Hero to be Awarded Medal of Honor



AMERICAN FORCES INFORMATION SERVICE
NEWS ARTICLES

By Donna Miles

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 10, 2007 – More than 40 years after demonstrating the heroism immortalized in the best-selling book and movie, “We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young,” retired Army Lt. Col. Bruce P. Crandall will receive the Medal of Honor, the White House announced yesterday.

Crandall will receive the nation’s highest military award for actions during the Battle of Ia Drang Valley in Vietnam in November 1965. The battle, at Landing Zone X-Ray near the Ia Drang River, was the first major ground battle of the war.

During the incident, Crandall, then a major and commander of Company A, 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), dodged intense enemy fire as he repeatedly flew to a landing zone to rescue and resupply besieged 1st Cavalry Division ground troops.

The narrative for Crandall’s Medal of Honor credits him with displaying leadership by example and fearless courage as he “voluntarily flew his unarmed helicopter through a gauntlet of enemy fire on flight after flight, delivering desperately needed ammunition, water and medical supplies into one of the most hotly contested landing zones of the war.”

Crandall led a flight of 16 helicopters in support of the 1st Cavalry Division’s 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, which was out of water, running dangerously low on ammunition and engaging about two regiments of North Vietnamese army infantry “determined to overrun and annihilate them,” the narrative reads.

When the enemy fire got so intense that the infantry commander closed the landing zone, Crandall volunteered for the mission. He and his wingman, Maj. Ed Freeman, are credited with saving more than 70 wounded soldiers by transporting them to safety.

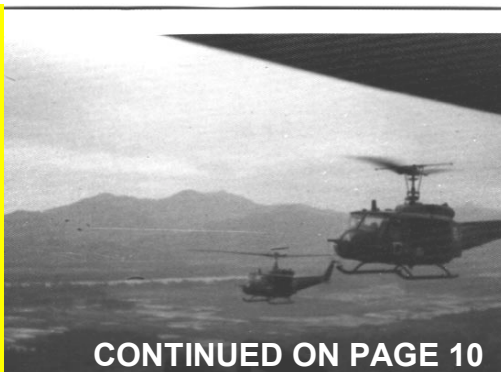
Freeman received the Medal of Honor for his efforts in July 2001.

Several books about the battle recognize Crandall and Freeman’s contributions. Among the most well-known is the bestselling “We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young,” coauthored by Lt. Gen. Harold Moore, commanding officer of infantry units in X-Ray, and Joseph Galloway, a combat reporter who was in the landing zone during the battle.

A major motion picture based on the book featured actor Greg Kinnear as Crandall



229th Hueys in operation sometime in April 1966. On the left returning to Base Camp at An Khe. Right in a right echelon Air Assault formation, usually with four to sixteen choppers plus a couple of gunships, we always came in hot with guns firing.



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Later during his Vietnam tour, Crandall demonstrated another act of heroism. While under enemy fire, using a flashlight to guide his UH-1 Huey helicopter, he dropped through dense jungle to rescue 12 wounded soldiers. For that action, he was awarded the first AVCO-Aviation/Space Writers Association Helicopter Heroism Award. This award is sponsored by the Aviation/Space Writers Association and AVCC Corporation, and is awarded to an individual for heroism efforts involving the use of helicopter..

During a second tour in Vietnam, in 1968, Crandall was downed during another rescue attempt and spent five months in the hospital. He resumed his military career, retiring as a lieutenant colonel in 1977.

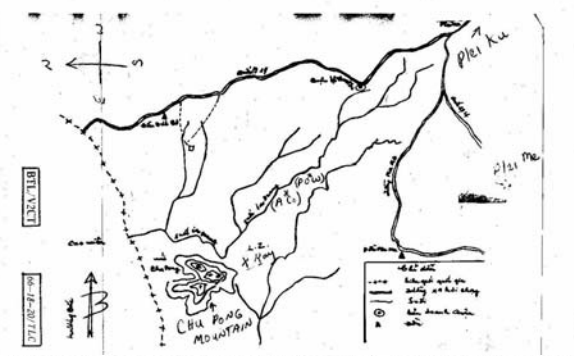
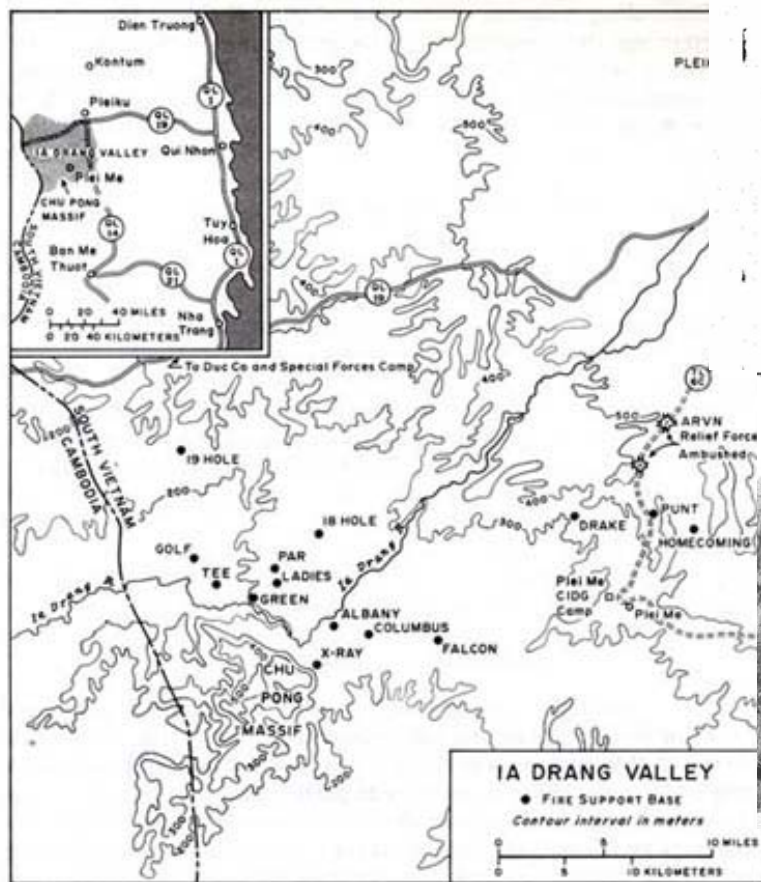
Crandall was inducted into the Army Aviation Hall of Fame at Fort Rucker, Ala., in 2004. He also was the seventh Army inductee into the "Gathering of Eagles," a U.S. Air Force organization that honors contributors to aviation.

Bush will present Crandall the Medal of Honor during a Feb. 26 White House ceremony.

After receiving the Medal of Honor, Crandall will join 111 other living recipients of the award, 60 of them awarded for actions in Vietnam, according to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society.

The Medal of Honor, the highest U.S. military decoration, is awarded "for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life, above and beyond the call of duty, in actual combat against an armed enemy force." Since it was first awarded during the Civil War, the medal has been awarded 3,461 times.

The Medal of Honor was last presented to the family of 22-year-old Marine Cpl. Jason L. Dunham, who died using his body to shield fellow Marines in Iraq from a hand grenade April 15, 2004. President Bush awarded Dunham's Medal of Honor posthumously during a Jan. 11 ceremony at the White House.

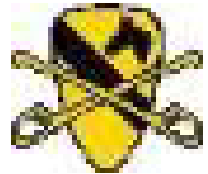


ARA ship just before my first air assault which was into LZ X-RAY. This picture was taken just outside Plei Me S.F. Camp end of March 66



OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

Official Website of Multi-National Force - Iraq



Wednesday, 14 February 2007

Despite risks, air still safest travel in Iraq

By Fred W. Baker III
American Forces Press Service



A soldier watches for enemy action as fellow soldiers board a U.S. Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter following a cordon and search operation in Tall Aswad, Iraq. The soldiers are from Delta Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Robert C. Brogan.

WASHINGTON — Air travel is still the safest way to transport troops and supplies in Iraq, despite the recent rash of downed helicopter incidents, a top official there said yesterday.

Six helicopters have either been shot down or crashed since Jan. 20, Army Maj. Gen. James E. Simmons, deputy commanding general for support for Multi-National Corps - Iraq, said.

In the past three weeks, two Army UH-60 Black Hawks and two AH-64 Apaches have been shot down, killing 16 soldiers, he said. A Marine CH-46 Sea Knight went down outside Baghdad on Feb. 7, killing all seven Marines onboard, but early reports indicate mechanical failure caused that crash, Simmons said.

Also, two civilian helicopters have crashed in eastern Baghdad, one killing five private security company employees, according to reports. No casualties were reported in the second crash.

Officials believe two of the Army incidents were linked, the general said. Both times, insurgents set up explosive devices along the routes most likely to be used by the deploying coalition quick-reaction force, he explained.

Simmons discounted reports, though, that advanced missile systems are being used to shoot down helicopters in Iraq. There is no evidence supporting that, Simmons said. He also said there is no evidence that a specific group has been targeting the aircraft.

But, he said, insurgents are adapting, their tactics have evolved, and Army air missions have increased.

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“We are engaged with a thinking enemy. This enemy understands ... that we are in the process of executing the prime minister’s new plan for the security of Baghdad. And they understand the strategic implications of shooting down an aircraft. It is in their interests, from a strategic perspective, to attempt to engage and shoot down our aircraft,” Simmons said.

Army helicopters average 100 enemy firefights monthly and are hit about 17 times a month. Most times the helicopters are able to fly back to base. Simmons said that is a testament to the quality of pilots, crews and equipment.

The number of flight hours for the Army has nearly doubled in the past two years. In 2005, pilots logged about 240,000 hours. This year, Simmons said, he expects that number to reach nearly 400,000 hours. In 2006, pilots and crews flew 334,000 hours.

The Army has lost 29 helicopters to enemy fire since March 2003, Simmons said. The majority of the firefights involve machine-gun and heavy-machine-gun fire, categorized as up to 23 mm, Simmons said. But, he added, some surface-to-air missiles, such as SA-7s, SA-14s and SA-16s, have been used to shoot down Army helicopters.

Investigations are ongoing in the incidents, but meanwhile it is business as usual for Army aviators in Iraq, Simmons said. Some procedures have been modified, but the Army has not slowed down its flying time and it has not cancelled any missions.

“We have not cancelled one mission, and there has been absolutely no reduction in rotary-wing aircraft flight -- nor will there be,” Simmons said. “We have reviewed our procedures, and we have made modifications as to how and where and when we’re flying, and we will do that periodically.”

Simmons, who is an Army master aviator, said he is a passenger on an Army helicopter almost daily.

“I can’t tell you how proud I am of the young men and women who are operating these machines. They’re incredible talented. They’re incredibly bright. They’re incredibly courageous,” he said.

“We will continue to fly. It is the safest way that I know of to get around here in Iraq. And we will continue to do it and I will continue to be proud to fly with them.”



VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT BEGINS FOR

RUNNING HORSE GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

FRESNO, CA – The Running Horse Golf Championship, one of the PGA TOUR's Fall Series events, will be held October 22-28, 2007 at the Running Horse Golf & Country Club here in Fresno.

This PGA TOUR tournament will be one-of-a-kind, with 80% of the event's net proceeds going to U.S. Veteran Organizations, through the Central California Veterans Home Support Foundation. The remaining 20% of the net proceeds will go to local valley charities.

U. S. Veterans will play an important role at the Running Horse Golf Championship making up a large part of the Volunteer base and will be honored throughout the year at special Championship events. Each year one outstanding Veteran will be selected to be honored by the Championship with a ceremony that will take place Tournament Week.

In order for this event to be a success, approximately 1,500 volunteers will be needed in various walking, standing or Sitting positions. A list of the committee descriptions is available online. **EVERY VOLUNTEER COUNTS!**
We need your participation as a veteran or veteran supporter to volunteer so we can all make the biggest impact Possible and show tremendous support for U. S. Veterans everywhere

Those interested in volunteering for the Championship may register at www.runninghorsechampionship.com. For Those who do not have internet access, you may call the Championship Office at (559) 233-4653 to request a Hard copy of the application. There are committees that have been reserved exclusively for veterans that are only Offered on the "Veterans Application". The password to access the online application is: vetpga

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
Www.runninghorsechampionship.com or contact

LISA HAWKINS AT (559) 233-4653



THE GUARDIAN

SERVING MADERA COUNTY VETERANS



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